

Monthly Highlights

June 2009

- Since their official opening in mid May 2009, the six Return Integration Community Centers (RICCs) in Baghdad assessed the situation of 1,160 return and IDP families in the city (approx. 6,960 persons). The assessment showed that 39% of the families' priority needs is shelter rehabilitation, 29% for food, 20% for infrastructure (water, sewage) and the rest of the needs varied between legal assistance (documentation) and employment opportunities.
- To reflect the increasing return trend and to improve the return management, UNHCR Iraq's country budget increased from USD 80,686,094 million to USD 178,279,095. The increase includes an increase in the shelter rehabilitation and reconstruction project for returnees and vulnerable IDPs with a revised targeted at 21,180 shelter units in 2009. The budget will also supplement the already established six RICCs in Baghdad with additional ten centers in Salah Al-Din, Diyala, Anbar, Kerbala, Basra, Ninewa d Kirkuk. Locations of the centers will be identified in close collaboration with the MoDM and the Gol.
- Within 24 hours of the explosion that occurred on 20 June in the Turkmen town of Taza, in Kirkuk during which 80 people were killed and as many as 100 houses were destroyed as well as the Shorjas market. UNHCR immediately dispatched 50 tents and NFIs requested by the authorities. UNHCR's local NGO partner is working closely with the Mayor of Taza to rehabilitate up to 150 damaged houses and 75 shops in Shorjas.
- UNHCR enriched its presence in Basrah with an International Field Officer on permanent basis. This is the first full deployment of international staff in Basrah, Iraq, since the office evacuated in 2003. The program delivery continued despite the evacuation, through the national staff based in Nassariya, Kerbala and Basrah. UNHCR will supplement its Basrah office with a second International staff, Protection Officer as of September 2009.
- With "Real People, Real Needs", as this year's global theme for the World Refugee Day (WRD), UNHCR Iraq and its partners, donors, non-governmental and governmental organizations, together with refugees, IDPs and returnees, commemorated WRD on June 20 in the North, South and Central governorates of Iraq. The commemoration included a wide range of activities such as photo exhibitions, folk dancing, football matches, and inauguration of play areas for kids, lectures and panel discussions. Prizes and gifts were distributed to winners of competitions and children. For probably the first time since the fall of the previous regime, major Arabic satellite channels broadcasted the WRD events and held interviews with refugees, officials from UNHCR and officials representing the Government of Iraq.

